

REMARKS

Claims 1-74 are pending.

Applicants note with appreciation the consideration of the Information Disclosure Statements filed August 5, 2002, as indicated by the Examiner-initialled copies of the PTO Form 1449s that accompanied these Information Disclosure Statements. A third Information Disclosure Statement was filed April 18, 2003, before the first Office Action was mailed. Applicants respectfully request that the third Information Disclosure Statement also be considered and that such consideration be indicated by return of an Examiner-initialed copy of the PTO Form 1449 that accompanied the third Information Disclosure Statement.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the allowance of claims 42-64 and the indication that claims 1-41 contain allowable subject matter. While the objection regarding the language of claims 1 and 24 is acknowledged, Applicants believe that the claim language is grammatically correct and that no amendment is needed. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Regarding the reasons for allowance given in the Action, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-64 are considered allowable for at least the reasons indicated in the Action.

Regarding claims 65-74, these claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,164,746 to Akahira et al. ("Akahira") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,489,928 to Takahashi et al. ("Takahashi"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 65 recites a method for fluid level management in a media coating system, wherein the media coating system has an applicator with a trough to contain the media coating fluid. A media coating fluid level within the applicator is determined against a predetermined upper refill limit and a predetermined lower refill limit. A determination is made whether a media coating operation is in progress, and the media coating fluid is transferred from a supply item to the trough of the applicator when the level of the media coating fluid is lower than the predetermined lower refill limit and a media coating operation is in progress.

The Action refers first to Takahashi for various features recited in claim 65 and then begins an explanation of features missing from Akahira. It is not entirely clear from the Action what portions of Akahira and Takahashi are relied on for various claimed features. Applicants' representative made various attempts to contact the Examiner via telephone for clarification but was unable to reach the Examiner. For the purposes of this response, the Action is interpreted to rely on a combination of Akahira and Takashi for features recited in claim 65.

Turning first to Akahira, this patent discloses a system and technique for manufacturing a color filter by discharging inks on a substrate while scanning an ink jet head having a plurality of nozzles relative to the substrate. See Abstract of Akahira. FIG. 10 of Akahira shows how ink is dispensed from ink nozzles of an ink-jet head onto a substrate. FIG. 6 illustrates a sectional view of a color liquid crystal display device incorporating a filter manufactured by an ink-jet printer.

The Action (apparently) points to col. 10, ll. 57-59 of Akahira for the step of determining a media coating fluid level within the applicator against a predetermined upper refill limit and a predetermined lower refill limit. This portion of Akahira describes a liquid crystal compound 18 filled in a gap between glass substrates included in a color liquid crystal display device. Applicants can find no disclosure or suggestion in this or any other portion of Akahira of determining a media coating fluid level within an applicator against a predetermined upper refill limit and a predetermined lower refill limit as recited in claim 65.

The Action relies on col. 9, ll. 28-30 (apparently) for the claimed feature of determining whether a media coating operation is in progress. This portion of Akahira explains how a resin layer 3' can be formed on a substrate by a coating method. Applicants can find no disclosure or suggestion in this portion or any other portion of Akahira of determining whether a media coating operation is in progress as recited in claim 65.

The Action admits that Akahira does not disclose transferring the media coating fluid from a supply item to the trough of the applicator when the level of the media coating fluid is lower than the predetermined lower refill limit and a media coating operation is in progress as set forth in claim 65. The Action apparently relies on Takahashi for this feature.

Takahashi discloses a liquid-repellent application process for a liquid ejection recording apparatus. The Action points to col. 7, ll. 6-11 of Takahashi as allegedly showing the claimed feature of transferring the media coating fluid from a supply item to the trough of the applicator when the level of the media coating fluid is lower than the predetermined lower refill limit and a media coating operation is in progress. This portion of Takahashi describes how a coating plate 20 is moved back and forth by the movement of a cam rotated by a motor and how a guide bar 21 is imparted a force to draw the coating plate into the liquid repellent agent storage container 17.

Applicants can find no disclosure or suggestion in this portion or any other portion of Takahashi of transferring the media coating fluid from a supply item to the trough of the applicator when the level of the media coating fluid is lower than the predetermined lower refill limit and a media coating operation is in progress as recited in claim 65.

Further, Applicants can find no disclosure or suggestion in Takahashi of determining a media coating fluid level within the applicator against a predetermined upper refill limit and a predetermined lower refill limit and determining whether a media coating operation is in progress, which, as indicated above, are steps missing from Akahira.

Therefore, Takahashi does not make up for the deficiencies of Akahira, and claim 65 is considered allowable over any combination of Akahira and Takahashi.

If the position is maintained that all of the features recited in claim 65 are shown by Akahira and Takahashi, Applicants respectfully request that each claimed feature be specifically addressed, that it be specifically pointed out where in the patent(s) there is a disclosure or suggestion for each claimed feature, and that to be clarified how each claimed feature is shown by the proposed combination.

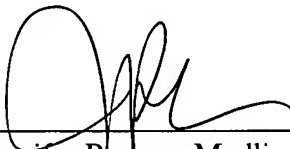
Claim 70 recites similar features as claim 65 and is considered allowable for at least the same reasons. Claims 66-69 and 71-74 depend from claims 65 and 70, respectively, and are considered allowable for at least the same reasons.

For the foregoing reasons, all the claims are considered allowable. A Notice to this effect is respectfully solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

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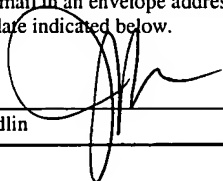
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Jennifer Pearson Medlin

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12/9/03